DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 165 057 CG 013 126

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TITLE Associations Between Reasons for Dating, Orientation, Commitment and Behavior: Verification of a Study by McDaniel.
PUB DATE 78
NOTE 12p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adults; Assertiveness; *Dating (Social); *Individual Psychology; Marriage; *Mate Selection; Peer Influence; Research Projects; *Social Development; *Socialization
IDENTIFIERS *McDaniel (Clyde O)

ABSTRACT

A study of dating behavior by McDaniel was replicated, using a single adult population instead of college undergraduates. The hypothesis stated that recreational dating was associated with peer orientation, low commitment and assertive behavior; that mate selection dating was associated with family orientation, medium commitment and assertive-receptive behavior; and that anticipatory socialization dating was associated with personal orientation, high commitment and receptive behavior. Computation of product moment correlation coefficients provided evidence that none of the predicted associations were supported by the data except those predicting a relationship between anticipatory socialization and high commitment, and anticipatory socialization and receptive behavior. High product moment correlation coefficients between variables indicated that there may be confounding of variables on the McDaniel instrument. (Author)

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Associations Between Reasons for Dating, Orientation, Commitment and Behavior: Verification of a Study by McDaniel

Betty Gittman, Hofstra University, 1978

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McDaniel (1973) identified three purposes for dating. One purpose was recreational, dating for personal enjoyment. A second purpose was mate selection, dating to find a suitable partner for a relationship. A third purpose was anticipatory socialization, dating one person to test out what marriage with this person would be like.

Orientation referred to the extent to which an individual was receptive to opinions and values from various sources. These sources of orientation were friends and family. Personal orientation was defined as a lack of receptivity to the opinions and values of friends and family.

Commitment referred to the degree to which one was willing to adjust one's own behavior in order to satisfy one's date and also the degree to which one was willing to adjust the date's behavior to satisfy oneself.

Behavior referred to the assertiveness or receptivity which one displayed towards the date. Assertive behavior was defined as behavior that was independent and self-centered. Assertive-receptive behavior was midway between independent and self-centered at one extreme, and dependent centered on the dated person at the other extreme. Receptive behavior was dependent and centered on the dated person.

McDaniel collected data from 396 females and 181 male volunteer undergraduate students at the University of Pittsburgh. He found that the subjects who were dating for recreational purposes were likely to be peer oriented, to express a low level of commitment to the person dated, and to be assertive in their behavior towards the person dated. Subjects who were dating for purposes of mate selection were likely to be family oriented, to express a medium level of commitment to the person dated, and to behave in an assertive-receptive manner towards the person dated. Subjects who were dating for purposes of anticipatory socialization were likely to be personally oriented, highly committed to the person dated, and receptive in their behavior towards the person dated.

Problem Statement

What are the associations between reasons for dating, orientation, commitment and behavior?

Hypotheses

1 Recreational dating is associated with (a) peer orientation, (b) low commitment, and (c) assertive behavior.

2 Mate selection dating is associated with (a) family orientation, (b) medium commitment, and (c) assertive-receptive behavior.

3 Anticipatory socialization dating is

associated with (a) personal orientation, (b) high commitment, and (c) receptive behavior.

Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 are based upon the conclusions of McDaniels' study. The purpose of this study is to confirm the conclusions.

Sample

The McDaniel survey questionnaire was administered to 18 female and 18 male volunteers. Adults were employed for this study, instead of undergraduate students as in the McDaniel study, because it was assumed that adult singles were more experienced in dating, were more aware of their attitudes and were more appropriate as a normative group because their lives were more established in terms of activities, values and occupations than the lives of younger people simply because adults have had more time and experience in which to establish themselves.

The 36 subjects ranged in age from 26 to 56, with a mean age of 40.89 and a standard deviation of 8.52. Five subjects had completed a high school education, ten had attended but did not complete colleg, eleven had a college degree, and ten had advanced degrees. The incomes of the subjects ranged from $8,500 to $50,000, with a mean income of $24,915.52 and a standard deviation of $9,553.81. (Eight subjects did not state their income). Three

subjects earned less than $15,000. Twenty subjects earned between $15,000 and $30,000. Five subjects earned more than $30,000. Three subjects were widowed, twenty-six were divorced, and seven had never been married.

Design and Analysis

Subjects responded to the McDaniel survey questionnaire. Subjects consisted on the first 18 females and the first 18 males who arrived at an adult singles' rap group and who were willing to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire required approximately 10 minutes for completion.

Responses of the subjects to groups of items on the questionnaire purportedly measured the variables of purpose for dating, orientation, commitment and behavior. For each subject a score was computed on each variable. The data analysis was achieved by calculating Pearson correlation coefficients for the relationships between variables.

Results

Hypothesis 1 stated that recreational dating was associated with (a) peer orientation, (b) low commitment, and (c) assertive behavior.

The correlation coefficient expressing the

association between recreational dating and peer orientation was r = .09, n.s. The correlation coefficient for recreational dating and commitment was r = -.05, n.s. The correlation coefficient for recreational dating and assertive behavior was r = .14, n.s. Hypothesis 1 was not supported by the data.

Hypothesis 2 stated that mate selection dating was associated with (a) family orientation, (b) medium commitment, and (c) assertive-receptive behavior.

The correlation coefficient expressing the relationship between mate selection dating and family orientation was r = .22, n.s. The correlation coefficient for mate selection dating and commitment was r = .12, n.s. The correlation coefficient for mate selection dating and assertive behavior was r = .33, sig. at .05; and between mate selection dating and receptive behavior was r = .24, n.s. Hypothesis 2 was not supported by the data.

Hypothesis 3 stated that anticipatory socialization dating was associated with (a) personal orientation, (b) high commitment, and (c) receptive behavior.

The correlation coefficient expressing the relationship between anticipatory socialization and personal orientation was r = .12, n.s. The

correlation coefficient for anticipatory socialization and commitment was r = .45, sig. at .01. The correlation coefficient for anticipatory socialization and receptive behavior was r = .59, sig. at .001. There was no evidence to support Hypothesis 3(a) which predicted a relationship between anticipatory socialization and personal orientation. There was evidence to support Hypothesis 3(b) and 3(c) which predicted a relationship between anticipatory socialization and high commitment and between anticipatory socialization and receptive behavior.

Table 1 presents the correlation coefficients for the relationships between the variables that were measured by the questionnaire. Certain meaningful and significant correlations were found among the variables that were not predicted. The correlation coefficient for mate selection dating and anticipatory socialization dating was r = .60, sig. at .001. The correlation coefficient for mate selection dating and peer orientation was r = .31, sig. at .05. The correlation coefficient for anticipatory socialization and assertive behavior was r = .54, sig. at .001. The correlation coefficient for peer orientation and family orientation was r = .79, sig. at .001. The

Table 1 Correlation Coefficients For the Variables on the Dating Questionnaire

	rec	ms	as	po	fo	persor	commit	assert	recept
rec	1.00	.21	.21	.09	.09	.12	-.05	.14	.20
ms		1.00	.60***	.31*	.22	.10	.12	.33	.24
as			1.00	.20	.26	.12	.45**	.54***	.59***
po				1.00	.79***	.11	-.23	-.04	-.22
fo					1.00	.22	-.10	-.07	-.10
persor						1.00	.20	.15	.08
commit							1.00	.19	.68***
assert								1.00	.14
recept									1.00

* sig. at .05; ** sig. at .01; *** sig. at .001

rec = recreational dating
ms = mate selection dating
as = anticipatory socialization
po = peer orientation
fo = family orientation
persor = personal orientation
commit = commitment
assert = assertive behavior
recept = receptive behavior

correlation coefficient for commitment and receptive behavior was r = .68, sig. at .001.

Discussion

The hypothesis which predicted a relationship between recreational dating and peer orientation, low commitment and assertive behavior was not supported. Furthermore, no relationship was observed between peer orientation and low commitment, peer orientation and assertive behavior, or low commitment and assertive behavior

The hypothesis which predicted a relationship between mate selection dating and family orientation, medium commitment and assertive-receptive behavior was not supported. No relationship was observed between family orientation and commitment, family orientation and assertive behavior, family orientation and receptive behavior, or commitment and assertive behavior. There was a significant and meaningful correlation observed between commitment and receptive behavior.

The hypothesis which predicted a relationship between anticipatory socialization dating and personal orientation was not supported. There was evidence to support the hypothesized relationships between anticipatory socialization dating and high commitment, and anticipatory socialization dating and receptive behavior. No relationship was observed between personal orientation and commitment, or personal orientation and receptive

behavior. There was evidence of a significant meaningful relationship between commitment and receptive behavior.

One explanation of the failure to support the hypotheses may be that the questionnaire itself was not valid as a measuring device. The high correlation coefficient between mate selection and anticipatory socialization dating (r=.60, sig. at .001) indicates that the items which are intended to measure two distinct levels of the variable "purpose for dating" may in fact measure nearly identical constructs. These levels appear to be confounded in view of the high correlation between them.

Another peculiarity is that anticipatory socialization is highly correlated with assertive behavior (r = .54, sig. at .001) and also with receptive behavior (r = .59, r = .001). Assertive behavior and receptive behavior are purported to measure two exclusive sets of behaviors. Yet, both of these behaviors are correlated with the identical purpose for dating, and neither of these behaviors are correlated with any other reason for dating. It may be that the variable of behavior and the levels of "assertive behavior" and "receptive" behavior are not adequately measured by the questionnaire.

The high correlation between family orientation and peer orientation (r = .79, sig. at .001)

indicates that there may be some confounding of the levels of orientation, that peer orientation and family orientation may be measuring an identical construct.

In McDaniel's report the categories for dating purposes, orientations, behaviors and commitment were represented as being clearly defined and interrelated according to specific patterns (described in the hypotheses of the current study). The evidence collected in this study does not support the conclusions which were achieved by McDaniel. The high levels of correlation between specific variables (i.e. mate selection and anticipatory socialization, peer orientation and family orientation) indicate that there may be some confounding of levels. It is recommended that the McDaniel instrument be further developed for the purpose of providing evidence of validity and reliability. It appears as though the conclusions arrived at by McDaniel may be based on the measurements of an instrument that is not sufficiently free from ambiguity.

References

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